



Housatonic Heritage

Connecticut General Assembly
Planning and Development Committee
Testimony on House Bill 6584, March 6, 2009

Mr. Co-Chairmen and Members of the Committee:

I am Dan Bolognani, Executive Director of the Upper Housatonic River National Heritage Area. I am here today to testify in support of House Bill 6584 and to also represent my colleague, Charlene Cutler, executive director of Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor, who could not be here today. We thank Rep. Wilmot and Merrill for bringing forward this bill. We have provided written background information about our national heritage areas for your use.

The Connecticut Heritage Areas Program would:

1. Recognize the significant resources of National Heritage Areas in the State of Connecticut and that National Heritage Areas identify, protect, enhance and promote the historic, recreational, cultural, natural and scenic resources of our state;
2. Acknowledge that each National Heritage Area underwent a feasibility study and inventory of resources as a prelude to its congressional designation. Furthermore, each National Heritage Area operates according to a Management Plan required by federal legislation as well as subsequent management documents, and those documents are recognized by the National Park Service. Such management plans chart specific goals and objectives that serve as benchmarks for evaluating progress in conservation and enhancement of significant resources; and
3. Identify the two National Heritage Areas in the State of Connecticut: Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor and Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area. That together these areas represent the significant, large tracts of heritage landscape in Connecticut, approximately 20% of the state.
- 4.. recognize the national heritage areas in Connecticut as significant resources;
5. direct state agencies to include Connecticut National Heritage Areas in their planning processes and documents as significant state resources warranting preservation and enhancement; and
6. direct state agencies to develop partnerships with the Connecticut National Heritage Areas to preserve national heritage and encourage compatible

economic activities while maximizing scarce resources, including but not limited to environmental protection, heritage resource preservation, recreation, tourism promotion, trail development, and signage.

The effects of this bill would:

- Maximizes federal resources that come to the NHA through state partnerships that can be considered matching funds to the federal dollars, showing greater support for the NHAs mission and therefore, making their federal funding position stronger.
- Returns federal funds directly to the communities through grants, programs and projects identified by the communities' as important.
- Mitigates tough economic times by tremendously valuable cooperative partnerships.
- Stretches scarce state dollars by partnerships between NHAs and state agencies that will serve the interest of both parties and bring federal resources to the table.

What the bill will not do:

- Request state funding;
- Give any regulatory authority to the NHAs; or
- Impede existing state process and procedures.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony today and would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Dan Bolognani
Executive Director
Upper Housatonic River National Heritage Area

Charlene Cutler
Executive Director
Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Area